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ABSTRACT

As "mind" is a cultural achievement, newborns enter the world without minds. Life experiences profoundly influence the mind. The social culture provides conditions for the growth of mind and the direction it takes. As informal education is inadequate to fill social needs or actualize children's potentialities, societies create schools. Since a school cannot teach everything, selection is inevitable. One basis for selection ought to be a range of cultural resources from different cultures. Educators should choose material on the basis of: (1) the excellence of the content; (2) the psychological readiness of the individual students; and (3) the diversity of the forms of representation. It is important to consider the "implicit curriculum," the underlying norms and structures that exist in the schools. A school that views students as raw materials to be processed to meet the needs of consumers is unlikely to promote the individual artistic development of those students. The good school ought to enable students to not only find their own aptitudes, but to learn how to pursue those aptitudes in ways that go beyond the common ideas and practices of the culture. (SG)

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CONTRIBUTION OF EDUCATION TO CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

"The role of education in the cultural and artistic development of the individual"

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The Role of Education in the Cultural and Artistic Development of the Individual

Any intellectually adequate discussion of the potentialities of education to foster the cultural and artistic development of the individual must not only employ some conception of culture and art, it must also be built upon a set of premises concerning the nature of human nature. I begin, therefore, by advancing a conception of human nature rooted in premises about the nature of mind.

On the Creation of Mind

There is widespread belief in many cultures, particularly those in the West, that mind and brain are synonymous and that for all practical purposes, mind is essentially fixed. This view of the stable nature of mental ability has received enormous support from psychometricians and psychologists who have attempted to identify and measure those fundamental properties that constitute mind. The measurement of intelligence, one of the major arenas of psychometric inquiry, has been built upon a belief that intelligence does not fluctuate, that it remains constant across substantive domains, and that it transcends any local cultural considerations. Few in the psychometric community have been eager to devote their efforts to the measurement of something regarded as fugitive or fleeting or transient. The task was to get at an almost Platonic essence. This essence, called intelligence, was rooted in a fixed conception of mind.

The premise with which I work views the matter from an almost opposite perspective. I begin with the assumption that newborns enter the world without minds: they emerge mindless. They do not enter the world without brains. Brains constitute a set of biological resources that all children, except those congenitally impaired, possess when they enter the world. Mind, however, is a cultural achievement. The kinds of minds that children come to own are profoundly influenced by the kinds of experiences they are able to secure in the course of their life. These experiences are, in turn, shaped by the culture in which they live and, more specifically, by the sub-cultures within which children grow to maturity. Viewed from this perspective, mind is malleable; the kinds of minds individuals develop cannot be severed from the array of opportunities they have had in the course of their development.

The Cognitive Functions of Culture

Culture, in the sense in which I use the term, is similar to the way in which the term is used in a biological context. In the field of biology a culture is a growing set of organisms whose vitality is sustained through some medium. The

features of a culture's growth not only depends on its genetic properties, but on the characteristics of the medium in which it finds itself. Biologists grow cultures by providing the conditions through which its viability is sustained.

In a similar vein, the social culture to which our work is directed also provides conditions for the growth of mind and the direction it takes. Viewed this way, mind is not a fixed entity defined once and for all at conception. Rather, it is the product of opportunity. UNESCO's agenda is, I think, to expand the array of opportunities through which different minds can be grown.

The major resource through which such growth takes place is, as I have suggested earlier, the culture at large: its language, its art, the symbol systems and forms of representation it employs, the values it embraces, the spiritual interests that permeate it, in fact, the entire complex of intellectual, social, religious, and technological features that collectively constitute a civilization. However, the child's ability to meaningfully access specific cultural resources does not develop as an automatic consequence of maturation. Children, like all of us, learn to "read" the forms, rites, rituals, and values of the culture or sub-culture in which we live. Our capacity to construe meaning from cultural resources is actualized through conditions that are provided by families within the home and neighborhood, and by the social life of villages and cities in which humans live and grow.

The Contributions of Schools and Other Cultural Institutions

Much of the learning that takes place is informal, that is, it is not explicitly structured by parents or others but occurs rather within a kind of cultural atmosphere that influences the direction it takes. Because most societies have recognized that informal educational conditions, while important, are inadequate to fill either its needs or to actualize the child's the potentialities, schools are created whose programs define many of the opportunities children will have to learn how to access cultures' resources. It is the school that provides the formal occasions and explicit aims that shape cognition. These occasions are realized mainly through two primary pedagogical resources: the curriculum and the processes of teaching. It is the character of the curriculum, both with respect to the kind of content it provides and the kinds of activities and tasks in which that content is embedded that impacts the child. It is the quality of the teaching that students encounter that mediates the curricular content. Curriculum and teaching, therefore, may be said to constitute the systole and diastole of formal education.

However, curriculum and teaching, like the heart itself, exists within an "envelope." We call that envelope a school. The schools' features -- the way they organize time and space, the norms that pervade them, the roles assigned to those who teach and administer schools, the way in which time is assigned to curriculum, the forms of evaluation employed -- are all constitutive of the culture of schooling. Thus, the cultural and artistic development of the individual is significantly influenced by the kind of place that a school is. This is not to suggest that the school alone, or even primarily, determines such development. It is to acknowledge the critical role that schools play in shaping the ways in which

children learn to think and what it is that they have an opportunity to think about.

The argument that I have advanced thus far is an optimistic one. It says that minds are malleable and that culture at large and subculture in particular influence the direction that the growth of mind takes. This view is optimistic in another sense as well: while we cannot do anything about the biology of the brain, we can do a great deal about the conditions and opportunities the young have during the course of their development. It is educational and social policy pertaining to those conditions that are critical in defining the direction cultural change is to take.

The Role of the School and the Process of Education

I turn now to the more specific implications of these views for the cultural and artistic development of the individual. Central to my analysis is the role of the school in the process of education.

I have already indicated that culture in the broadest sense, including popular culture, embraces the entire spectrum of resources that collectively constitute a way of life. Such a conception, while broad and generous, is so inclusive as to leave the problem of selecting those aspects of the culture that should be included in a school program utterly open-ended. Such a conception is of little help to those who must make practical decisions about the kind of content, goals, and opportunities to be provided for the young. What is needed therefore is a basis from which selections can be made that is defensible with respect to certain educational values. Since a school cannot teach everything, selection is inevitable. One basis for selection, from my perspective, ought to be a range of cultural resources selected from different cultures. That is, even a relatively culturally homogeneous society -- say a country such as Norway -- ought to introduce its young to the fact that important objects and ideas can be found in every culture on earth. This is not to suggest that Norwegian students, or students in any other culture for that matter, can address everything that has been produced in every culture. The point here is that it is important for students to understand that their own particular situation, their own particular nation, has no monopoly on cultural virtue. The way this can be best demonstrated is to insure that cultural diversity is present in the materials and tasks that children are asked to address. But even then, there is the problem of selection. One such problem pertains to the "width" of selection. That is, how should the range of cultures be determined? As a rule of thumb it should be wide enough to include cultures that are beyond the traditions that have influenced in a primary way the culture in which educational planning occurs. That is, European cultures should include the works found in Asian cultures, and so forth. The emphasis here should be on differences in forms of life.

What within diverse cultures is legitimate to include? I believe that at least three criteria are of particular importance. The first relates to matters of excellence. Excellence is, in the end, a matter of judgement. But judgements are not simply expressions of taste, they are considered opinions based upon evidence

that resides in the qualities of the work addressed. Although experts may disagree with each other on these matters, disagreements emerge in arguments put forth. The arguments put forth depend upon what an individual who holds a position is able to sustain by reference to the work to which the position is addressed. Judgements about excellence compete for acceptance within a cultural community. Thus, I do not believe that it is possible to elude expert opinion concerning the merit or value of those cultural artifacts, events, ideas that ought to be included in the students' educational agenda.

However, excellence alone is a pedagogically inadequate basis for curricular inclusion. Educational value never resides in a vacuum. Educational planners ought to make selections not only with an eye to the more or less intrinsic value of a set of cultural resources, but also with respect to what is likely to be meaningful to the students who are being served by the school. Thus, the material and activities selected need to be within the developmental level of students; they need to be able to address it meaningfully. Thus, both the excellence of the content and the psychological readiness of the individuals the school program is to serve are two fundamental criteria for making decisions about what the school should provide. The specific ways in which these cultures are to be used to build educational programs is beyond the scope of this paper.

I do not want to lose the central point I am attempting to make. That point pertains to the importance of helping the young learn to appreciate not only those high quality achievements that they might <u>not</u> learn to "read" on their own within their own culture, it is also important to help them understand that no culture has a monopoly on virtue. Such a program might help diminish ethnocentrism and raise the youngster's consciousness to the global achievements of men and women throughout history.

There is a third criterion relevant to programs designed to increase the cultural and artistic development of the individual. This consideration relates to the forms of representation that are employed. Different forms of representation emphasize the use of different sensory modalities. Music, for example, emphasizes matters of audition. The visual arts place a premium on vision. Theater employs audition and vision. The form of audition used in theater pertains mainly to language while music requires a form of audition that addresses those meanings found in patterned sound. Each sensory modality is refined through the tasks on which it is exercised. Since individuals have different aptitudes for securing meaning within different sensory modalities, the provision of a wide array of forms of representation, each of which place different premiums on different sensory modalities, has two important educational consequences. First, since each form requires different modes of thought, the development of such modes depends upon opportunities for their use. Thus, building educational programs in which different sensory modalities are used for the construction or recovery of meaning is one way, in general, of enriching mind. Second, because individuals possess different aptitudes in specific modalities, the absence of particular forms of representation in the curriculum or their low status handicaps those students whose aptitudes reside

in domains that are marginalized. Educational equity, therefor, is increased when the curricula that are provided in schools have sufficient diversity to be inclusive rather than exclusive. At present there is such a privileged place given in western schools to language in its propositional form and to number, that those forms of meaning which can only be represented in the arts often go unexplored and unappreciated. It should be noted that this position of privilege is not restricted to the west. In UNESCO's survey of 65 nations, only twenty-eight required the study of art at the elementary level, 41 the study of music, and only eleven required courses in dance. Put more simply, the provision of a wide variety of art forms in the curriculum is a way not only of developing mind, but of providing educational equity to students whose aptitudes reside in the use of one of those art forms.

Three Criteria for the Development of Educational Programs

What emerges from the foregoing analysis are three criteria for the development of educational programs within schools designed to foster the cultural and artistic development of the individual. First, the works students encounter, whether ideational or material, should represent the most significant achievements within a wide array of cultures. This recommendation is premised on the view that among the products humans create not everything is created equal and that it is better for students to encounter what is better than what is of lesser merit. I acknowledge that such a selection rests upon matters of judgement, but such judgements can be sustained by the reasons given for the selection: Judgements are arbitrated within a critical community.

Second, the selection of content for an educational program must be sensitive not only to what is excellent within a culture, but what is likely to be meaningful to the individuals being served by the program. Although the emphasis I have placed on the importance of excellence may appear, at first, elitist, my emphasis is intended to avoid utter relativism in the selection of content. In addition, the consideration I have just put forth, namely that the content be meaningful and developmentally appropriate for the individuals to be served by the program should make place for those ideational and material objects and forms that may not be of the highest quality of excellence, but nevertheless are pedagogically instrumental to the individual's growth.

A third consideration that I have advanced is the importance of diversifying the forms of representation that are employed in the educational program. The wider the variety of forms, the wider the forms of meaning and the more likely that a wider range of aptitudes will be tapped. Widening the eye of the needle will increase the number of individuals who can pass through and find a place in the educational sun.

The Meaning of Art

With respect to artistic issues, there is fundamental need for clarification of the term. Art, of course, can refer to objects possessing particular kinds of form, a kind we often refer to as aesthetic. Art can also refer to a kind of experience that

results from particular kinds of interactions with the world. The latter view is substantially broader than the former. The latter view would, carried to an extreme, regard as artistic the full engagement of a youngster doing science or math since both of these domains of human activity have the potentiality to provide experience which can legitimately be called aesthetic.

Now there is a distinction that has historically been made between the aesthetic and the artistic. The aesthetic refers primarily to the receptive side of art, namely to that side pertaining to matters of appreciation. Artistic, however, refers to the construction of art forms, that is, to their creation. I would argue that meritorious educational programs in the schools address both the aesthetic and the artistic. In fact, the aesthetic is often neglected as teachers devote their energies engaging children in the making of objects. While opportunities to work with materials in order to create images is, undoubtedly, of the utmost importance, neglect of the development those forms of perception that make aesthetic experience possible is extremely serious. It is certainly possible for pupils to engage in art-making activities that have little to do with aesthetic experience. When this is the case, the motivation to pursue the arts as a source of aesthetic pleasure and personal insight is diminished.

The Implicit Curriculum

I indicated earlier that the "envelope" within which the forgoing considerations reside is the school as a whole. The school displays and imposes a set of norms and provides opportunities and restricts them. The import of this observation is that the truly effective development of the individual with respect to culture and art must address not only classroom practices, but the norms of the school and the organizational structures that define its way of life.

It has been argued by many scholars that the school's "implicit curriculum" is in the long run more powerful than what is explicitly taught. The kinds of norms and structures that exist in the schools, the expectations for students and the traditions that pervade it are an enduring and pervasive part of the institution. Thus, a school that imposes a right-angled mechanical rationality to students and rewards student performance that replicates such an image is unlikely to encourage those forms of thinking that require a softer, more organic and imaginative form. Poetry and most forms of art have no fertile soil on which to grow in schools in which technocratic criteria dominate.

Schools that regard students as raw material to be processed so that they can meet the needs of consumers or that conceive of education as essentially a form of vocational training are unlikely to provide conditions conducive to the artistic development of the individual. Where an institution provides no place for matters of sensibility, imagination, or idiosyncratic insight, there is little likelihood that formal courses will outweigh the impact of the school's culture as a whole.

It is typically the case in Western technologically-oriented societies that educational reform efforts are often addressed to specific curricular or pedagogical practices while neglecting the institutional norms and the structure of schooling.

Very often those reform efforts fail because as reform efforts enter the school they are changed by the school rather than changing the school. Typically, reform efforts are simply too weak to have the impact that reformers want them to have. The lesson here is that serious efforts at building institutions that cultivate the artistic and cultural development of the individual must address those ubiquitous values and structural conditions that provide the envelope within which teaching and learning take place. Schools that are inhospitable to the forms of thought and feeling that the arts and aspects of culture represent cannot be expected to foster them.

It is clear from the remarks that I have made thus far that the primary focus of my attention has been upon the school and what schools can do to foster the cultural and artistic development of the individual. Education, as I indicated early on, is not limited to the school. Museums, theaters, dance companies, and the rites and rituals of culture at large also have a potentially important role to play. This role can be performed most effectively when those who shape their policies regard them in pedagogically useful ways. To achieve such a vision will often require a dramatically different conception of the educational potential of these institutions and the forms that are required to make those potentialities a reality. In addition, the family and the culture at large also educate. I focus on the school, however, because that is the area of social life I know best from a scholarly perspective. I focus on the school because the school provides an intentionally planned agenda that the family and the culture at large does not. In addition, I do not believe that the school's primary focus ought to merely replicate the cultural experience that is provided by the family or the society. The school has a special responsibility. That responsibility is to go beyond what it is that ordinary experience in everyday living is likely to foster. If schools do not do more than what the culture at large does, there is little reason to support them.

Schools ought to push the boundaries of possibility with individuals. In fact, they ought to develop in students a kind of critical-mindedness which enables them to examine the cultural symbols around them and to critique the arts they find. Ideally, schools should enable individuals to invent new cultural forms and new forms of art that, in turn, contribute to the array of resources available to others within the culture. In this process difference rather than similarity ought to be celebrated.

In emphasizing difference or variance of outcome through schooling, I emphasize a direction opposite to the one that is normally taken. Most educational practices within conventional schools are designed to get every student to the same destination and, ideally, at the same point in time. On the contrary, I believe that good schools ought to increase individual differences rather than diminish them. I believe that good schools increase the mean but also expand the variance. The virtue of diversification is that when individual aptitudes are cultivated and when diversity is fostered, the individual's ability to feed the society is increased. We grow from receiving from others that which we do not possess and cannot create for ourselves. It is through our differences that our lives are enriched.

Hence, the good school ought to make it possible for students to not only find their own aptitudes, but also to learn how to pursue them in ways that go well beyond the ideas and practices that are generally available within the culture. In short, schools ought not to be factories for cultural reproduction. They ought to be places in which student growth makes it possible for the culture at large to grow.

The forgoing represents what I hope is an internally consistent array of premises and their implications for educational practice intended to foster the cultural and artistic development of the individual. So much of what we do in schools is inconsistent with that aim. Until the scope of educational reform efforts is wide enough to alter and improve the norms and structural conditions of the institution, the likelihood of making a significant difference in the cultural and artistic development of the individual within the context of schooling is less than optimal.

The argument I advanced concerning the cultural and development of the individual that was premised on a conception of human nature. The successful realization of the aims implied by the argument depend not only on policy; they ultimately depend on action. It is in the school and more specifically in the classroom that whatever educational aims are embraced find their practical realization. The achievement of the aims implied in the foregoing will not be easy. Therefore, it is perhaps best to conclude this essay with a number of questions that demand further deliberation. My hope is that as tentative answers are formulated to these questions, a deeper understanding of the practical changes that need to be made will occur.

1. Can teachers who are not specialists in the arts or in ethics be enabled to teach these areas well? If so, how?
2. What kinds of assessment practices would help educators and others determine if the programs that were planned were educationally effective?
3. What changes in the structure of schooling would need to be made in order to foster the artistic and cultural development of students?
4. What will be required, both conceptually and practically, to move the arts and the students' cultural development closer to the center of the school's educational agenda?
5. What kinds of instructional support materials and forms of human support are needed to enable teachers who have no pedagogical training in arts education to teach the arts effectively?
6. What implications for the preparation of arts teachers do the arguments in this paper have for changes in the ways in which teachers are prepared?